

INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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Finland

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Problems:

Every "human machine" educated to working age costs to the community appr. 10 mill. Fmk. Every death in working age means also a great economical loss. Only healthy worker is efficient in production. In Finland every year appr. 20 000 death happen in age between 16-18 years. Injuries and diseases cause ten thousands of disabled. Every man and woman is yearly away from work 8-10 days for sickness. The national economical losses for death and sickness are almost on the same level as yearly state budget: it means 200 000 000 000 Fmk. To prevent early death, injuries and sickness among working population and to improve the health and working capacity of working population is the aim of the Institute of Occupational Health.

The Occupational Medical Foundation was established in 1945 for the purpose of "supporting the research of the questions of occupational diseases, industrial accidents and hygiene, vocational guidance and other questions of occupational health". From the 13 members of the Board the State Cabinet appoints 8. Others are appointed by the Central Organisation of the Employers (2), the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions(2), the Central Organisation of the Insurance Companies (1), the City of Helsinki (1) and the Association for Preventing Accidents(1). The Foundation has during the years 1945-51 given 77 scholarships, created the library of the field and procured a rich research equipment. From the donations received by the Foundation 93.5 % comes from the employers, 4.7 % from workers and 1.8 % from insurance companies.

The opening celebration of the Institute of Occupational Health took place on May 26th 1951. The costs of the institute and its equipment have been about 300 million Fmk. The functions of the institute are: (1) to examine and develop methods to safeguard and to improve the health of workers; (2) to make, on request of authorities and private persons, occupational health surveys in plants, as well as other investigations in the field of occupational hygiene and medicine; (3) to assist, as occupational hygiene experts, the governmental and communal authorities and institutions working for the improvement of the health of employees; (4) to confer, by request, with physicians, technical officials and social workers, trade unionists, and other persons on questions connected with social medicine and occupational health; (5) to serve as a diagnostic and clinical center for occupational diseases; (6) to operate, by agreement, as a health center in Helsinki for small plants, state institutions, vocational and other schools and institutes to the extent that research and information are required; (7) to arrange courses in occupational health and social medicine.

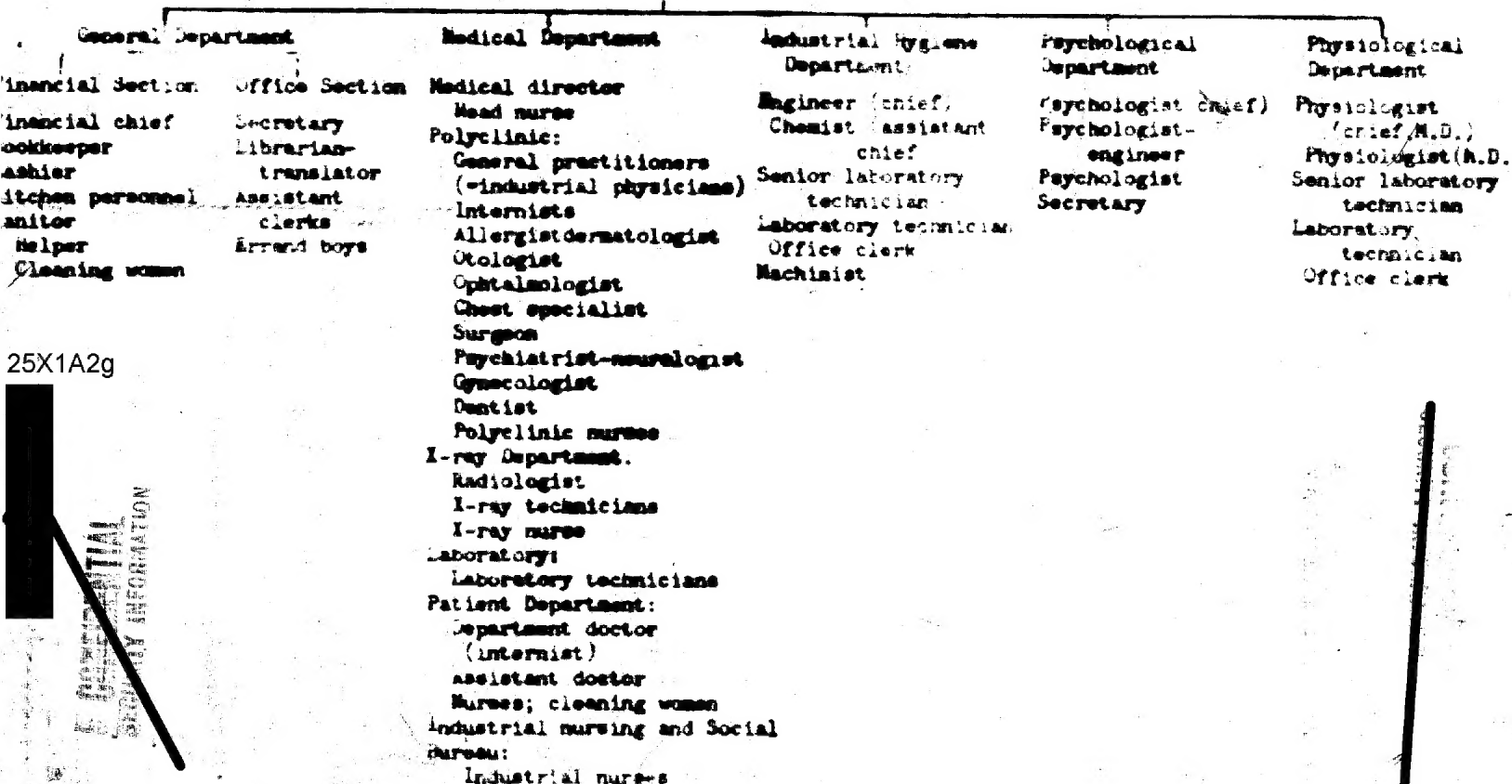
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The Institute is managed by the Occupational Medical Foundation. Its organization is shown in the following scheme:

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FOUNDATION

Board of the Institute

Chief of the Institute



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In the hospital (31 beds) of the medical department have during the year 627 patients been treated. The total amount of treatment days was 9,997. The medical service of the institute included 65 working places with 3,350 persons in total, representing different occupations. From these came 6,300 visits to the polyclinic. 926 persons, which were suspected to have an occupational disease, were examined, the number of polyclinic visits being 4,500. Pre-employment and periodical examinations amounted to 618. A statement of the working ability has been given only in five cases. Miniature X-rays (70 x 70 mm) have been taken in 441 working places of 10,723 persons. In the roentgenological department were 2,276 examinations carried out, in the clinical laboratory 22,734.

The industrial nursing activity has included the receptions in larger working places, home visits and the polyclinical work.

The most important research objects have been: the sickness absenteeism, the costs of the medical services, the dermatitis due to cobalt, occupational skin diseases in graphic industry, the chronic CO-poisoning and the effectivity of different hearing shelters.

The physiological department has been studying following subjects: the water and mineral balance and its hormonal regulation during different forms of stress; the physiology of timber work; pulmonary function tests; the release by heat or manual labour of substances reducing the metabolism; the influence of different forms of stress on the suprarenals and their reactions; fluid balance and physical fitness. 209 different clinical-physiological tests have been carried out.

The most comprehensive investigations of the psychological department are the following: psychological appropriateness of the bark, surface and end mark of floating log; the merit rating of foremen made by work managers; the theory of the dynamic field as a basis of organization research; the motor personality tests, their planning comparison and validity research; the factors of intelligence; the statistical analysis of the traffic accident figures obtained from the City of Helsinki in order to study the individual factors causing traffic accidents; the selection method of pupils to the electric department of the vocational school; the planning of dexterity tests in order to develop an appropriate selection and placing method for different dexterity jobs; the psychological investigation of musical talent; the psychological approach to the time and motion study in office work; the vocational fitness tests of edgers of saw-mills. In addition to this 478 persons in five institutes have been submitted to aptitude tests; advices and expert aid given to several working places and institutes.

The activity of the technical-hygienic (industrial hygiene) department has principally been concentrated on field work in industry. 57 plants have been examined and 275 air samples taken. The amount of analyses carried out in the laboratory was 308. In all those cases, where the investigations on the working places have revealed factors dangerous for health, directions for improving the defect have been given.

The training and information work has been many-sided. Regular training has been given to medical students and industrial physicians, nurses and industrial nurses, students of technology, pharmacology and the pupils of the Gymnastic Institute, to Army officers, to social clerks and trade union clerks on the working places. The amount of the auditors has been about 1,500. About 1,000 hours of lectures have been given.

Other lectures have been given on about 15 different courses, discussion days and at meetings of societies.

From the foreign connections may be mentioned, that at the end of the year the mailing list comprised 150 names. The institute was visited by guests from 18 countries and 11 persons from the staff made journeys abroad for the purpose of studying.

The holders of the scholarships of the foundation have in the years 1945-50 published 123 research works. In the year 1951 69 works have been published from the Institute of Occupational Health.

The means of the Foundation were at the end of the year Fmk 20 mill. and the budget of the Institute of Occupational Health amounted to 42 mill. from which 40 % was state aid and 60 % obtained through own work.